NUMB. LXXI.

The GUARDIAN.

Quale portentum neque Militaris
Daunia in latis alit esculetis,
Nec Jubæ tellus generat, Leonum
Arida Nutrix. Hor.

Tuesday, June 2. 1713.

I Question not but my Country Customers will be surprised to hear me complain that this Town is, of late Years, very much infested with Lions; and will, perhaps, look upon it as a strange Piece of News when I assure them that there are many of these Beasts of Prey, who walk out Streets, in broad Day-light, beating about from Coffee-house to Coffee-house, and seeking whom they may devour.

To unriddle this Paradox, I must aquaint my Royal Reader that we polite Men of the Town give the Name of a Lion to any one that is a great Man's Spy. And whereas I cannot discharge my Office of *Guardian* without setting a Mark on such a noxious Animal, and cautioning my Wards against him, I design this whole Paper as an Essay upon the Political Lion.

It has cost me a great deal of Time to discover the Reason of this Appellation, but after many Disquisitions and Conjectures on so obscure a Subject, I find there are two Accounts of it more satisfactory than the rest. In the Republick of *Venice*, which has been always the Mother of Politics, there are near the *Doge*'s Palace several large Figures of Lions curiously wrought in Marble, with Mouths gaping in a most enormous Manner. Those who have a Mind to give the State any private Intelligence of what passes in the City, put their Hands into the Mouth of one of these Lions, and convey into it a Paper of such private Informations as any way regard the Interest or Safety of the Commonwealth. By this means all the Secrets of State come out of the Lion's Mouth. The Informer is concealed, it is the Lion that tells every thing. In short there is not a Mismanagement in Office, or a Murmur in Conversation, which the Lion does not acquaint the Government with. For this Reason, say the Learned, a Spy is very properly distinguished by the Name of Lion.

I must confess this Etymology is plausible enough, and I did for some time acquiesce in it, till about a Year or two ago I met with a little Manuscript which sets this whole Matter in a clear Light. In the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, says my Author, the renowned *Walsingham*, had many Spies in his Service, from whom the Government received great Advantage. The most eminent among them was the Statesman's Barber, whose Sirname was *Lion*. This Fellow had an admirable Knack of fishing out the Secrets of his Customers, as they were under his Hands. He would rubb and lather a Man's Head, till he had got out every thing that was in it. He had a certain Snap in his Fingers and a Volubility in his Tongue, that would engage a Man to talk with him whether he would or no. By this Means he became an inexhaustible Fund of private Intelligence, and so signalized himself in the Capacity of a Spy, that from his time a Master-Spy goes under the Name of a Lion.

Walsingham had a most excellent Penetration, and never attempted to turn any Man into a Lion whom he did not see highly qualified for it, when he was in his Human Condition. Indeed the Speculative Men of those Times say of him, that he would now and then play them off and expose them a little unmercifully; but that, in my Opinion, seems only good Policy, for otherwise they might set up for Men again, when they thought fit, and desert his Service. But however, tho' in that very corrupt Age he made use of these Animals, he had a great Esteem for true Men, and always exerted the highest

(Price Two Pence.)

highest Generosity in offering them more, without asking Terms of them, and doing more for them out of meer respect for their Talents, tho' against him, than they could expect from any other Minister whom they had served never so conspicuously. This made *Raleigh* (who professed himself his Opponent) say one Day to a Friend, *Pox take this Walsingham, he baffles every Body, he won't so much as let a Man hate him in private.* True it is, that by the Wandrings, Roarings, and Lurkings of his Lions he knew the way to every Man breathing, who had not a Contempt for the World itself: He had Lions Rampant whom he used for the Service of the Church, and Couchant who were to lie down for the Queen. Then they were so much at Command that the Couchant would act as Rampant, and the Rampant as Couchant, without being the least out of Countenance, and all this within four and twenty Hours. *Walsingham* had the pleasantest Life in the World, for, by the Force of his Power and Intelligence, he saw Men as they really were, and not as the World thought of them: All this was principally brought about by feeding his Lions well, or keeping them Hungry, according to their different Constitutions.

Having given this short, but necessary Account of this Statesman and his Barber, who, like the Taylor in *Shakespear's Pyramus* and *Thisbe*, was a Man made as other Men are, notwithstanding he was a nominal Lion, I shall proceed to the Description of this strange Species of Creatures. Ever since the wise *Walsingham* was Secretary in this Nation, our Statesmen are said to have encouraged the Breed among us, as very well knowing, that a Lion in our *British* Arms is one of the Supporters of the Crown, and that it is impossible for a Government, in which there are such a variety of Factions and Intrigues, to subsist without this necessary Animal.

A Lion, or Master-Spy, has several Jack-Calls under him, who are his Retailers in Intelligence, and bring him in Materials for his Report; his chief Haunt is a Coffee-house, and as his Voice is exceeding strong, it aggravates the Sound of every thing it repeats.

As the Lion generally thirsts after Blood, and is of a fierce and cruel Nature, there are no Secrets which he hunts after with more delight, than those that cut off Heads, Hang, Draw and Quarter, or end in the Ruin of the Person who becomes his Prey. If he gets the Wind of any Word or Action that may do a Man good, it is not for his purpose, he quits the Chace, and falls into a more agreeable Scent.

He discovers a wonderful Sagacity in seeking after his Prey. He couches and frisks about in a thousand sportful Motions to draw it within his Reach, and has a particular way of imitating the Sound of the Creature whom he would ensnare; an Artifice to be met with in no Beast of Prey, except the *Hyæna* and the Political Lion.

You seldom see a cluster of Nws-emongers without a Lion in the midst of them. He never misses taking his Stand within Ear-shot of one of those little ambitious Men who set up for Orators in Places of Publick Resort. If there is a whispering hole, or any publick-spirited Corner in a Coffee-house, you never fail of seeing a Lion couched upon his Elbow in some part of the Neighbourhood.

A Lion is particularly addicted to the Perusal of every loose Paper that lies in his way. He appears more than ordinary attentive to what he reads, while he listens to those who are about him. He takes up the *Postman*, and snuffs the Candle that he may hear the better by it. I have seen a Lion pore upon a single Paragraph in an old Gazette for two Hours together, if his Neighbours have been talking all that while.

Having given a full Description of this Monster, for the Benefit of such Innocent Persons as may fall into his Walks, I shall apply a Word or two to the Lion himself, whom I wou'd desire to consider that he is a Creature hated both by God and Man, and regarded with the utmost Contempt even by such as make use of him. Hangmen and Executioners are necessary in a State, and so may the Animal I have been here mentioning; but how despicable is the Wretch that takes on him so vile an Employment? There is scarce a Being that would not suffer by a Comparison with him, except that Being only who acts the same kind of part, and is both the Tempter and Accuser of Mankind.

N. B. *Mr.* Ironside *has, within five Weeks last past, mused three Lions, gorged five, and killed one. On* Monday *next the Skin of the dead one will be hung up, in Terrorem, at* Button's *Coffee-house over-against* Tom's *in* Covent-Garden.

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